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RURAL AREAS
DEVELOPMENT

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NOV 7 1968

NEWSLETTER

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October 1968

No. 96

FIRST LOAN MADE UNDER NEW RURAL HOUSING PROGRAM

A Poplar Grove Arkansas, housing cooperative will soon build 5 two-bedroom and 13 three-bedroom houses, the first homes in the Nation built with cooperative housing loan funds administered by the Farmers Home Administration.

An insured loan of \$150,000 repayable over 50 years will be made to Poplar Grove Rural Cooperative Housing Project, Inc. The cooperative was formed by 18 low-income families to provide adequate housing for its members at a cost they can afford. This will be the first time that the families who will enter the new homes will have modern heating and up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms.

TEN NEW RC&D PROJECTS ANNOUNCED FOR FISCAL YEAR 1969

The Resource Conservation and Development Program got off to a good start in fiscal year 1969 with the authorization for planning assistance of ten new RC&D projects. They are in these States:

Colorado in Las Animas, Huerfano, Pueblo, Custer, and Fremont counties.

Kansas in counties of Pratt, Barber, Kingman, Harper, and Sumner.

Massachusetts in the Berkshire and Franklin counties

Michigan in the Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Osceola, and Wexford counties.

Nevada in Esmeralda, and parts of Eureka, Lander, Nye, and Churchill counties.

Arkansas in Randolph, Lawrence, Sharp, Izard, and Fulton counties.

New Mexico in Hidalgo, Grant, and part of Catron counties.

South Carolina in Cherokee, York, Lancaster, Chester, Fairfield and Union counties.

South Dakota-Wyoming in the counties of Custer, Lawrence, Pennington, Meade, Fall River, and Butte, South Dakota in South Dakota; and Crook, Niobrara, and part of Weston in Wyoming.

Wisconsin Florence, Forest, Langlade, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Oneida, Shawano, Vilas, and Lincoln counties.

This action will provide technical help to local sponsors in these areas to develop plans which will accelerate the development of resources, the objective being to improve job opportunities and increase income.

These bring to 57 the number of RC&D projects currently in operation in the United States. They cover 168 million acres.

A BROAD THRUST IN S.W. MISSOURI TO RAISE JOBS AND INCOME

Southwest Missouri is a picturesque area with its rugged hills and craggy bluffs, plains and rolling farm lands, 575 miles of good fishing streams, and hundreds of caves. The ancient mound builders lived there; pioneers settled there or moved along the Butterfield Stage route west.

Yet the area has declined. Population has dropped and a substantial percentage of area families have annual incomes under \$3,000. Many communities are without adequate telephones, sewage systems, and other community services.

The Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Project aims to remedy this with resource development and improved management that will create more jobs and higher incomes. Its area of concentrated activity includes the nearly 4 million acres of Barry, Barton, Cedar, Dade, Jasper, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton, Stone, and Taney Counties.

Major objectives of the project are to:

- Improve water resources for farm and municipal use and halt flooding damage amounting to over \$800,000 yearly.
- Reduce stream, lake and ground water pollution, particularly from 13,000 acres of surface-mined land.
- Promote proper land use and erosion control.
- Develop and improve field, forage, specialty and woodland crops.
- Encourage new industry in the area to provide jobs and outlets for local products.
- Improve transportation, communication, education, and health facilities.
- Promote tourism and develop recreation facilities and fish and wildlife resources.

Local sponsors have more than 800 proposed project measures to carry out these aims over a 15-year period. The measures will cost an estimated \$127 million, but will bring \$152 million in increased local income during that period. After all measures have been completed, the project is expected to boost local income more than \$83 million a year and provide thousands of man-years of employment.

COAL FIELDS HEALTH EFFORT BLOOMS

Last year an anti-poverty program began to bring comprehensive health care to low-income residents among the Southern West Virginia coal fields. This year the effort will not only continue but its services may triple. Financed by an OEO grant of \$1,842,584 the Raleigh County Community Health Project can increase its services to residents in a 25 community, 600 square mile area. These services, which reached 3,400 persons last year may help as many as 12,000 in fiscal 1969. Headquarters for the projects is in Beckley where the Mountaineer Family Health Plan, a nonprofit corporation, carries medical attention to the poor from the Appalachian Regional Hospital there. Outlying district centers and a taxi-ambulance service gives the Health Plan "reach" far beyond that of a regional hospital.

Moreover, 85 of those being helped are being trained and hired to operate much of the service.

USDA HOLDS REGIONAL STAFF TRAINING SESSIONS

The outreach function of the Department of Agriculture -- designed to help rural communities identify and obtain governmental and other services they need to prosper -- and other TAP activities are the subject of a series of intensive departmental training sessions held throughout the United States during October.

Assistant Secretary John A. Baker scheduled the seven sessions, for Atlanta, Georgia; Columbus, Ohio; Boston, Massachusetts; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Salt Lake City, Utah; and San Francisco, California.

"Outreach is one of the most important aspects of our job today," Mr. Baker said, "While it is not new, that responsibility has taken on new meaning and urgency as the effects of rural-urban imbalance ravish not only the countryside but the city as well."

Attending the sessions are members of State Technical Action Panels from States near the meeting sites. State TAP's are composed of heads of USDA agencies and of other Federal and State agencies responsible for the operation of their respective programs in each State.

"Basically, we at USDA are trying to stimulate," Mr. Baker explained, "sound and stable development in town and country that will improve farm income and start Main Street cash registers to ringing more often and more merrily. We want to help the people obtain the better things of life that can be bought with better incomes."

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COUNTY SUPERVISORS ACT TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

In Napa County California the County Supervisors have adopted zoning district regulations for establishing "agricultural preserves" to keep areas of open space in the countryside. The new regulations establish a minimum lot area of 20 acres and specify permissible uses. This kind of thing can be done successfully in California since the California Land Conservation Act of 1965. As a result of the act, the county can now enter into contracts with landowners to assure reduced property taxes in exchange for land-use-conservation legal commitments by the landowners.

RECORD NUMBER OF PEOPLE HELPED BY FARMERS HOME IN FISCAL '68

More than four million rural people - a record number - benefited from Farmers Home Administration loan services during fiscal 1968. Funds totaling \$1,359,100,000 were advanced to them of which \$803 million was provided by private lenders on an insured basis. The remainder was made available mainly from collections on loans made in previous years.

Of special significance -- over 55,000 families benefited from some \$494 million in rural housing funds that included \$12.3 million in credit to finance housing for senior citizens, \$13.2 million to construct or improve rental housing for both senior citizens and low-income rural residents, and \$7.2 million in loans and grants to provide adequate housing for farm laborers.

Also, more than a million rural people will benefit from the construction and improvement of 1,043 rural community water or sewer systems through \$162.6 million in loans and over \$23.7 million in grants made in fiscal 1968.